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Bill Creates New Visa Category to Help Foreign Students with STEM Degrees Start Businesses in America and Create U.S. Jobs

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WASHINGTON – Today, Reps. Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Charles F. Bass (R-NH) introduced the INVEST Act to strengthen our economic competitiveness by fostering an enhanced environment for start-ups. Specifically, the legislation would make it easier for foreign students who have graduated from U.S. universities with degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM), and other related fields, to stay in the country if they start their businesses here and create American jobs.

According to research by the Kauffman Foundation, 60,000 foreign students graduate each year from a U.S. university with a STEM degree. At the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), for example, foreign students make up nearly 40 percent of the graduate student body. Due to the lack of U.S. immigration options, many of these talented individuals are being forced to return to their country of origin at the expiration of their student visas, where they then take their entrepreneurial ideas, build on them in those foreign countries, and boost those economies instead of our own, while creating competition for American companies.

"As the nation continues to struggle with a sluggish economy, we must make every effort to speed-up our recovery," **Rep. Schiff** said. "The loss of American-educated talent only contributes to our economic problems, and we should do all we can to retain those who hold highly-coveted STEM degrees and want to stay in the U.S., start a new business, and hire U.S. workers by encouraging them to make the U.S. their home."

"Our economic success depends on the willingness of investors and entrepreneurs to take risks with their ideas," **Rep. Bass** said. "It doesn't make sense that we inhibit this economic growth by making it difficult for highly-educated students, particularly those with science, technology, engineering, or math degrees, to remain in the country after graduation and build upon their ideas. Our legislation will encourage these highly-skilled individuals to grow their businesses right here in the United States, boosting job creation and our economy."

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and the Partnership for a New American Economy, a national bipartisan group of more than 400 business leaders and mayors, released a report today that shows that more foreign-born workers means more jobs for U.S. natives. As many as 262 additional native-born workers are employed for every 100 foreign-born workers putting advanced U.S. degrees to work in STEM fields.

"The INVEST Act will allow highly skilled entrepreneurs the opportunity to build the next great company and to do it in America," **Reps. Bass and Schiff** wrote in a Dear Colleague letter to other Members. "Our universities are educating the next generation of Steve Jobs – we want to make sure they build the next Apple in the United States and not overseas."

Under the legislation, permanent residency will be made available to immigrant entrepreneurs who are in the process of completing or have recently completed a graduate STEM degree from an accredited university in the U.S. To qualify, the immigrant entrepreneur must start a new business relevant to the area of study; create two new jobs or invest \$200,000 after two years; and create five jobs or invest \$500,000 in the business within five years.

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